

**BOROUGH OF NORTHAMPTON
REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING
APRIL 21, 2022**

CALL TO ORDER: A Regular Public Meeting of the Northampton Borough Council was called to order by President Anthony Lopsonzski, Jr. at 7:30 PM on Thursday April 21st, 2022. The meeting was held in Council chambers and began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL: Council Members present at roll call were: President Anthony Lopsonzski, Jr., Kenneth Hall, Trevor Stone, Judy Haldaman, Bonnie Almond, Julia Kutzler, Ron Glassic, Tony Lopsonzski Sr., and Mayor Tony Pristash. Junior council person Ryleigh Tillotson and Borough Manager LeRoy Brobst were absent. Also present were Solicitor Brian Panella, Police Chief Bryan Kadingo and Recording Secretary, Keith Knoblach.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Due to unforeseen circumstances, our recording secretary was unable to complete the Minutes from the March meetings for approval at this meeting. We are looking to have them available at the first meeting in May.

HEARING OF PERSONS PRESENT:

Victor Rodite, Borough Community Planner, of East Stroudsburg, provided a grant update. A list of eligible projects was presented by Mr. Rodite. Upgrading the sewer lines on Canal Street was mentioned by using money allocated for handicapped ramps on Newport Avenue. Total costs may be upwards of \$200,000. The second project mentioned was from the 2021 CBDG funding to construct a pavilion at the Canal Street Park. The proposed location is within a flood plain and obtaining the necessary permits would be rather expensive. The recommendation is to move the project to the northern end of the park, out of the flood plain, creating a rest stop pavilion and information center for persons using the D&L Trail. There is also a possibility of adding restrooms. Mr. Rodite noted that there are going to be some design challenges in the parking lot that an engineer will have to survey. There is also an opportunity to provide landscaping. The third project mentioned was to purchase security cameras. However, the money for the grant has been allocated to the fire department. Mr. Rodite has met with the Borough Manager and has a strategy to maybe start small with monies from the general fund, and if the system proves beneficial proceed with a grant funding application next year, if the fire department does not need the funding. The fourth project promotes safety along the trail and Mayor Pristash has saved the Borough around \$1,000.00 by taking professional pictures of places in the Borough that trail users may want to visit. Mr. Rodite addressed the traffic issues along 21st Street that overflows into the surrounding neighborhoods. Mr. Rodite recommends a traffic study to upgrade the traffic signal at 21st and

Main Street and link it to Laubach/Siegfried Avenues and 21st Street to make traffic flow more efficiently along 21st Street. These upgrades could include the use of cameras and other new technology available.

Councilwoman Kutzler questioned how the Borough can proceed with this project when the roadways involved are PennDOT roads. She also questioned if the problem is in the Borough or caused by the light in the Cementon area. Mr. Rodite provided that the Borough can control the light and is responsible for its operation. Also, this project will require the approval of PennDOT and the proper procedures will be followed and allows the Borough an opportunity to apply for and receive funding for infrastructure improvement.

Councilman Glassic questioned the \$200,000 figure provided for the upgrading of the sewer lines. This should be the priority to upgrade the sewer infrastructure and sewer plant. Bethlehem just received \$2.9 million and there is \$80 million available through Pennvest. Where did the \$200,000 come from? Have we ever worked with Pennvest? Mr. Rodite advised that the money came from a community block grant. In the past they have approached Pennvest and now with the new Act 537 plan, when approved, will serve as a new guidebook.

Councilman Glassic stated that there is \$80 million available in Pennvest that has not been exhausted yet for sewer infrastructure upgrades which would allow for the \$200,000 to be reinvested into parks, trails, and recreation. He reiterated the priority that should be given to the sewer infrastructure and if the Pennvest avenue doesn't work out, there are plenty of 1.5% interest loans available. He requested that Mr. Rodite report to Mr. Brobst the outlook for utilizing Pennvest or a loan for the sewer projects. He noted that the money is out there and not being asked for and it would be a shame if we did not at least attempt to tap into it. Mr. Rodite stated that the best approach is to not look for just one source of funding, but several.

Councilman Lopsonzski Sr. asked for a clarification on the location of the new pavilion. Mr. Rodite responded that it would be located in the parking lot halfway between Canal Street and the grass to the rear of the parking lot. When questioned, Mr. Rodite added that it would not be in the middle of the parking lot, but rather along the edge near a utility pole. He further stated that the lot was not designed well and may require a retool. This would allow an opportunity to not lose any parking spots. Councilman Lopsonzski Sr. commented the rear of the parking lot by the railroad tracks seems to have ample room to build the whole project without losing any parking spots. It would also serve to buffer against railroad noise. He also noted that the grass was intended to be used for a project like this, as it was designed to accommodate a band shell. Mr. Rodite reiterated that there is no fixed location determined as of yet. A land survey still needs to be completed. The parking lot itself may need to be upgraded. He also noted that there could be several other options located there as well.

Councilwoman Kutzler expressed her apprehension of the project. She wondered if this is taking the problems from the south end of the park and moving them to the north end of the

park. She agreed with Councilman Glassic comments and wonders if we are just creating another problem.

Mr. Rodite clarified that it is not going to be a picnic type of pavilion.

Mayor Pristash added that it is going to more of a welcome center for people using the trail, not for picnics, and will provide travelers with bathroom facilities. He advised that with the new bridge there is going to be an emphasis placed on bicycling which will be bringing in numerous people to the Borough. This project is intended to be a pass through, not an event pavilion, for visitors who are using the parking lot to access the trails and river. The intent is to be more of a rest stop where visitors can use a restroom, get a map of the Borough and support businesses by knowing where they are located within the Borough. He further supported the idea of placing it to the rear of the parking lots grassy area before the railroad. He noted that this is what this money has to be spent on since this was what it was appropriated for.

Councilman Lopsonzski Sr. questioned whether the blighted property at 107-109 Laubach Avenue could be used as a tourist center due to its location. He stated the Borough should look into acquiring the property via eminent domain, clean it up and use it. He also stated the need for a bicycle repair shop and the possibility of recruiting one to open in the Borough.

Mr. Rodite, in conclusion stated he would be meeting with Mr. Brobst regarding these matters.

Jason Donohue of 1344 Stewart St, Northampton, PA 18067, made a complaint regarding 1360 Vienna Street and provided pictures of the condition of the property. He stated he called code enforcement and the Borough Manager, but to this date nothing has been done. He noted that he saw one of the code officers taking pictures, but it doesn't seem like anything is changing. He also complained about vehicles parking near the intersection resulting in people getting too close to his vehicles when driving by.

Councilwoman Kutzler stated it would be addressed.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

President Lopsonzski, Jr. had nothing to report.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Pristash congratulated the organizers of the egg hunt for a successful, well attended event. He also thanked public works for completing the setup.

He advised the Council that he had a meeting with Becky Bradley from the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission regarding infrastructure, which was extremely informative. She noted that the Borough of Northampton is geographically the center of the Lehigh Valley. This bodes

well for the Borough to continue to grow, develop businesses, provide access to housing, and draw tourists to the Borough. He noted that the Borough is in a good position to continue pushing forward.

Mayor Pristash concluded his report by stating that he is looking forward to the return of the Northampton Police Departments bicycle patrol, which should be ready to deploy shortly.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT:

Solicitor Panella stated that there was no report unless there were any questions from Council.

Councilman Glassic asked Solicitor Panella about a timeframe for an ordinance regarding abandoned vehicles.

Police Chief Kadingo advised Mr. Glassic if the vehicle is on private property it falls under the jurisdiction of code enforcement.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES:

Administration and Finance: **Councilman Hall** reported that we have received a dividend check on the Boroughs property and liability insurance in the amount of \$7,484.57. This is from years 2016 through 2020.

--On Friday April 8, 2022, William Paletski of East Coast Risk Management came to the office to report on the Borough's risk management assessment. Overall, we are doing quite well. The Boroughs evaluation score was 77%, and in his opinion, that is quite acceptable.

--The River Central Committee met twice – once on Tuesday, April 12, 2022, and again on Wednesday April 13, 2022. The meeting on Tuesday was a round table discussion of emergency services, which was attended virtually by Borough Manager LeRoy Brobst and Fire Chief Keith Knoblach. The meeting on Wednesday dealt with economic development and Victor Rodite took part, also virtually.

--The Northampton County of Governments met virtually on Wednesday, April 13, 2022. The meeting covered a variety of items. The one that was to most interesting dealt with the Affordable Connectivity Program. This provides low-income discount internet service. More information is available at www.fcc.gov/acp.

Building, Land and Recreation: **Councilwoman Haldaman** reported that on Monday, April 11, 2022, the River Front Garden Committee met to continue discussion and planning of the River Front Garden at the south end of the park and the rest pavilion/welcome center at the north end of the park.

--Later that same day, junior council person Ryleigh Tillotson and Mr. Brobst met with Northampton High School Principal Luke Shafnisky and athletic director Shaun Murray. The meeting was held in the Northampton High School and began preliminary planning for a parade to honor Northampton High School sport organizations.

--The egg hunt was held on Sunday, April 10, 2022, and the turnout was very good. Everything went smoothly and a special thanks to the many volunteers that helped distribute the eggs and hand out chocolate rabbits. There were some left over chocolate rabbits that were taken to the food bank to be shared with some of their clients.

Code and Police: Councilman Stone reported that the Planning Commission met Wednesday, April 13, 2022, and unanimously approved the Act 537 draft update. This is a joint plan with Allen Township regarding the wastewater treatment plant and sewer infrastructure. Council cannot act on this recommendation until a 30-day public review period has been observed. That period began on April 7, 2022, so Council action will be delayed until Thursday, May 21, 2022. Mr. Tom Duffy of Gilmore & Associates has checked this timeline with DEP, and they have accepted it.

--Notices were sent to those property owners who have failed to respond and register their rental properties. A \$25 penalty was assessed to each one.

Fire and Health: Councilwoman Kutzler reported that the Board of Health will not meet on Tuesday, April 26, 2022. The health officer will be at a multi-day seminar.

--Both the health board and health officer's reports were read.

--The Northampton Fire Police activity report was read.

--The Northampton Police Department activity report was read.

Public Works and Sewer: Councilman Glassic reported that the new mechanic, Aaron Bortz, has met all of the contingent conditions of his hiring and he will start on Monday, April 25, 2022.

--The Borough is still experiencing vandalism at the Canal Street Park restroom. The Borough Manger has contacted AACE Security about upgrading the cameras and recording system.

--The Borough's certified pesticide applicator, Jerome Serensits, has completed a two-day course and renewed his certification. This will enable him to monitor the chemicals of the pool, as well as applying weed killer as needed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS:

Consider Request of Central Assembly of God:

We have received a request from the Central Assembly of God Church in Bethlehem seeking permission to use Municipal "A" & "B" Pavilions on Sunday, September 18, 2022. In addition, they are seeking permission to use the permanent municipal band shell. As a nonprofit organization, they ask the waiver of any and all fees. They held this event last year and there were no problems.

Motion: A motion was made by Councilwoman Kutzler, duly seconded by Councilman Stone and unanimously carried to grant the request.

Consider Request to Hire a Part-time Police Officer:

We have received a request from Chief Bryan Kadingo to hire Aaron Koehler as a part-time police officer. He currently is the leading candidate on the Civil Service eligibility list.

Motion: A motion was made by Councilwoman Kutzler, duly seconded by Councilman Lopsonzski, Sr. and unanimously carried to hire the officer.

Councilwoman Kutzler noted that she would like to see the hiring of more full-time police officers instead of part-time officers.

At this time, Officer Koehler was sworn in by Mayor Tony Pristash with several members of the Police Department in attendance.

Consider Request of Northampton High School Boys Lacrosse Booster Club:

We have received a request from the Northampton Boys Lacrosse Booster Club to hold their annual end-of-year banquet in Municipal Park "A" Pavilion. It would also offer an opportunity for them to honor former coach Geoffrey Chenworth, who unexpectedly died on March 14, 2022. They have asked that the rental fee be waived.

Motion: A motion was made by Councilman Lopsonzski, Sr., duly seconded by Councilman Glassic, and unanimously carried to grant the request.

Consider Request of Siegfried Elementary School:

On several occasions over the last few years, we have received a request from Siegfried Elementary School to suspend no parking on East 17th Street near the NAA field to accommodate additional parking for parents visiting various events. The event dates are Friday, May 6, for a parent picnic, with a rain date of Friday, May 20; Thursday and Friday, May 12 & 13, Books on the Lawn; and Wednesday, June 1, Fifth Grade Moving Up Celebration.

Councilman Lopsonzski, Sr. stated that if this request was granted you would have parking on both sides of what would essentially be a lane and a half wide street. It would be difficult to manage traffic flow and could lead to some safety issues.

Councilman Glassic questioned if the street could become a temporary one-way street. Police Chief Kadingo advised that there are a few options, but the best option may be to close the entire street since there are no homes located on it. He also suggested that the NASD Police make a presence to assist with these events.

Councilman Lopsonzski Sr. agreed with Chief Kadingo.

Chief Kadingo suggested meeting with NASD to see exactly what they are looking for.

Solicitor Panella advised Council that once it is approved, it is approved, with no incentive for NASD to comply with any modifications. He also advised that tabling this issue could be another option.

Councilman Hall questioned what the difference is between this event and any other NAA games and if the timeframes for these events was known.

Councilman Glassic stated that he would be inclined to approve it after Chief Kadingo has a chance to meet with NASD officials.

Chief Kadingo again suggested to close the street

Solicitor Panella advised Council, if they were so inclined to do so, vote no and then make another motion to follow the recommendation of the Police Chief.

Motion: A motion was made by Councilman Stone, duly seconded by Councilwoman Almond, and the motion unanimously failed to carry to grant the request.

Motion: A motion was made by Councilman Lopsonzski, Sr., to revisit this request at the next meeting following the recommendations of the Police Chief after he meets with NASD officials, allowing it to become an agenda item, duly seconded by Councilman Hall, and the motion to revisit this item at the next meeting was unanimously carried.

Consider Request of Nazareth Area Chamber of Commerce:

We have received a request from the Nazareth Chamber of Commerce to utilize the portable band trailer on Saturday, July 30, 2022, for their Martin on Main festival. They would need to pay a delivery and removal fee and provide the Borough with a Certificate of Insurance naming the Borough as additionally insured.

Councilman Lopsonzski, Sr., stated that the bandshell and the portable bathrooms make a beautiful partnership.

Motion: A motion was made by Councilman Hall, duly seconded by Councilman Stone, and unanimously carried to grant the request.

Consider Request to Attend Training Course:

We have received a request from Chief Bryan Kadingo seeking permission to have three officers, namely Brent Danenhower, Emanuel Torres and John Shoemaker, attend the International Police Mountain Bike Association (IPMBA) cyclist training event. This course will take place from May 9, 2022 through May 13, 2022, at the Allentown Police Academy. The cost is \$200 per officer.

Motion: A motion was made by Councilman Lopsonzski, Sr., duly seconded by Councilwoman Almond, and unanimously carried to grant the request.

Consider Request of St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church:

We have received a request from St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church requesting permission to use our portable band trailer on Sunday, June 19, 2022, for their Heritage Festival. They would need to pay a delivery and removal fee and provide the Borough with a certificate of Insurance naming the Borough as additionally insured.

Councilman Lopsonzski, Sr. questioned whether the needed the portable bathroom to accompany the portable band trailer.

Motion: A motion was made by Councilman Stone, duly seconded by Councilwoman Kutzler, unanimously carried to grant the request.

Consider Request of Northampton Area School District Police Department:

We have received a request from Officer Michael Renner of the NASD Police Department requesting assistance from the fire police in connection with their graduation exercises scheduled for Friday 3, 2022, with rain dates of Saturday, June 4, 2022 or Sunday, June 5, 2022.

Councilman Hall advised that he may not have the personnel to assist them and this is the first he has heard of this request.

Motion: A motion was made by Councilman Stone, duly seconded by Councilwoman Almond, and unanimously carried to grant the request.

Consider Request to Attend Training Course:

We have received a request from Chief Kadingo seeking permission to have an additional officer, Officer Dennis Smith, attend the "Less Lethal Munitions Instructor Course". This course is scheduled for June 13, 2022. The course will be presented at the Lehigh Township Police station and the cost is \$275.

Motion: A motion was made by Councilman Lopsonzski, Sr., duly seconded by Councilwoman Almond, and unanimously carried to grant the request.

Consider Request of Northampton Fire Department:

We have received a request from the Northampton Fire Department to conduct a coin toss at the intersection of 21st & Main Streets on Saturday May 7, 2022, between the hours of 8 AM and 4 PM. This is similar to events they have conducted in the past. A PennDOT permit is not required.

Motion: A motion was made by Councilman Hall, duly seconded by Councilwoman Kutzler, and unanimously carried to grant the request.

Consider Approval of Amendment to Inter-Municipal Sewer Service Agreement:

Following months of negotiating, our solicitor has prepared a draft agreement for inter-municipal sewer services with Allen Township and after their last board of supervisors meeting, they approved the agreement. It is now Council's opportunity to finalize the agreement and approval.

Councilman Glassic stated he was under the impression that they were unable to do anything with this for 30 days.

Solicitor Panella advised that this was different than the Act 537 plan, which is going to be a resolution. This is the agreement with Allen Township authorizing the items in the Act 537 plan, essentially burying the hatchet.

Councilman Glassic clarified some items contained in the agreement.

Solicitor Panella further explained that it establishes sewer rates and the agreement will sunset in 10 years.

Councilman Lopsonzski, Sr. questioned if this agreement finally lays the dispute with Allen Township to rest. The solicitor stated it does.

Motion: A motion was made by Councilman Glassic, duly seconded by Councilman Stone, and unanimously carried to approve the agreement.

REPORTS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Kenneth Hall stated that traffic during the construction and paving on Route 329 was better than expected. It seemed like they used more traffic control measures.

--He reported that the mirror at E 21st Street and Ridge Alley has fallen down and needs to be replaced.

Councilman Stone thanked everyone who helped make the Borough Egg Hunt a success. He joked that next year they may need to "card" kids to verify their ages

--He also thanked the police department for their quick responses to emergencies.

Judy Haldeman had no report.

Bonnie Almond had no report.

Julia Kutzler had no report.

Ronald Glassic read a report from Public Works Supervisor Greg Morey.

--The risk assessment report is included in the packet.

--He questioned if the mirror at E 9th St and Dewey Ave is installed on the proper pole.

--He thanked Mr. Rodite for looking into Pennvest and grants.

--He has some questions on the bills, but will table until the Borough Manager returns.

Anthony Lopsonzski, Sr. requested that future egg hunts do not allow parents into the field with their kids. There was a situation where kids were almost trampled by parents trying to gather eggs for their children.

--He expressed interest to Mr. Rodite to attend future round table River Central meetings.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Motion: Councilman Lopsonzski, Sr. moved, seconded by Councilwoman Almond and unanimously carried to pay the bills as listed on A/P Journal #4A, dated April 8, 2022, totaling \$2,439.97, A/P Journal #4b, dated April 21, 2022 totaling \$103,644.58.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Councilman Hall, duly seconded by Councilwoman Almond and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:42 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Keith Knoblach
Recording Secretary